

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently amended)** A process for producing an aliphatic polyester with a reduced content of residual cyclic ester, comprising: producing an aliphatic polyester by ring-opening polymerization of a cyclic ester comprising glycolide or a mixture of glycolide and lactide containing 70 wt.% or more of the glycolide, wherein a latter period of polymerization proceeds by solid-phase polymerization, and after the polymerization, the aliphatic polyester is pelletized together with a thermal stabilizer to reduce a residual cyclic ester content down to about 0.3 - 0.8 wt.%, and then contacting the resultant pelletized aliphatic polyester in a particle form with a flowing heated dry gas under normal pressure, thereby entraining the residual cyclic ester with the gas and reducing the residual cyclic ester content down to below 0.2 wt.%.
2. **(Original)** A production process according to claim 1, wherein solid-phase polymerization is performed at a temperature of below 195 °C.
- 3-4. **(Cancelled)**
5. **(Previously presented)** A production process according to claim 1, wherein the heated dry gas is at a temperature of 120 - 225 °C.
- 6-7. **(Cancelled)**
8. **(Previously presented)** A production process according to claim 1, wherein the aliphatic polyester subjected to the removal of residual cyclic ester is in a form of particles having a diameter of at most 8 mm.
9. **(Cancelled)**
10. **(New)** A production process according to claim 1, wherein the pelletized aliphatic polyester is in a particle form having a diameter of at most 8 mm.